

**SYSTEM AND METHOD PERMITTING CUSTOMERS TO ORDER SELECTED
PRODUCTS FROM A VAST ARRAY OF PRODUCTS OFFERED BY MULTIPLE
PARTICIPATING MERCHANTS**

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 A universal automated order processing system
represents multiple (e.g., hundreds or thousands) participating
merchants who offer their products through the system.
Customers become qualified for using the system by supplying a
set of information (e.g., name, credit card number, shipping
10 address) that is stored in a customer database. When a customer
wishes to order a product, the customer calls the system,
customer identity is automatically confirmed, the customer
enters a product order number and the complete order is routed
to the appropriate merchant with the information necessary for
15 the merchant to fulfill the order. Available credit
verification and other aspects of credit card transactions may
be handled by either the system operator or the merchant. The
system operator may offer revolving credit. The system may also
be used to provide potential customers of the merchants with
20 free product information. In certain embodiments, the
processing system may be used to verify customer identity at
security check-in at public transportation sites (e.g.,
airports) or other public venues (e.g., concerts, sporting
events).

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